An exact Relation of all the late Revolutions in Messina, *with their Original, Causes, and Progress to this present; as it was communicated by a Letter, from an* English *Gentleman at* Naples *to a Person of Quality here.*

Printed by the Original.

Naples Adj. *February* the 16th. 1675. *S. N.*

SIR,

YOu know very well at my taking my leave of you at *Paris*, and that you were returning for *England*, I designed to have in Person visited *Messina*; but being come thus near, I am diverted from so perilous a Voyage, by the advice of my Friends, and the consideration of the dangers which attend that Man, who without any concern adventures himself into places embroyl'd in Wars and involved in Rebellion; Nor indeed could I (though I long sought after it) find any means of throwing my self from hence into that City, without running the hazard of being apprehended for a Spy, which (you know well) would prove a knotty affair among so jealous a Nation as the *Spaniards*, who in those, and Religious cases, are never sparing of their Tortures: these thoughts and difficulties made me therefore resolve to proceed no farther than this City, whence yet I doubt not, but I may in some competent measure, comply with, and satisfie the the injunction you laid upon me, of giving you a particular account of the troubles of *Messina*.

I need not tell you how it has for some Ages past been the hard Fate of the *Sicilians*, as well as *Neapolitans*, to have groan'd under the Yoke of Forreign Servitude, and that they have for some Centuries of Years, been sometimes exposed to the *French* Rule, sometimes to the *Spanish* Tyranny, and have often by the Aid of the one struggled to rid themselves from the other, though yet they were impatient of either: Of which let the *Sicilian Vespers*, and the great Revolution of *Naples* in *Masaniello*'s time, stand as ample Testimonies; to omit all other petty Rebellions and Revolts, in which this City, and that of *Messina* have always had their shares: and though the *Spaniards* may seem to have enjoyed for several Years past, a tranquil and quiet Dominion over those people of *Sicily*, yet the embers were only raked over, and the ill humours were not buried, but lull'd asleep, and from that rest there was gathered strength and vigour in the hearts of the people in General, and of the Nobility in Special, who were continually bemoaning to one another the bitterness of their slavery, and now wanted nothing but a happy conjuncture, to endeavour to crush that Pride wherewith the *Spaniard* (as they alledged) trampled over them.

The *Sicilian* Vespers were so called, because at the Ringing the Bell to Even-Song, the Natives rise in Arms and cut all the *French* Mens Throats.

There had now for some Years been held the Office of *Stratico*, or chief Magistrate of the City of *Messina*, one *Pedro de Lewis de Fregga*, a Man of no very ill or oppressive temper, but who suffered himself wholly to be ruled and governed by the Heads of the Family of *Merli*, to whom he was nearly allied by Affinity, several Matches having been made counterchangably between the two Families, and those of the *Merli* by many other great Matches they had made with the *Spaniards*, were so wholly Spanioliz'd, that they look'd with a kind of scorn and contempt upon their own Country-men, and having now got the reins of the Government by reason of *Don Pedro*'s calmess, into their own hands, rid furiously and stretched the proud and haughty temper of the *Spaniards*, upon the very Tenter-hooks, whilst that which made their rigour appear so much more Notorious, was that the rest of the people plainly perceived it proceeded from those, who should rather have joyned with them in common Defence against it, so that to see themselves Trampled over by Men of their own Strain, made them conceive a rage and hatred implacable, both against them, and the *Spaniards* that supported them.

This general murmur at length begot several private Meetings, and the Families of the *Marchesi, Giri, Grilli, Bentini, Carassi, Carnevari, Grimani*, and several other of the Principal of the City, had sundry close Assemblies in all which they bemoaned, and exasperated one another, and by degrees began to encourage each other to contrive some way for their Redemption, thus they proceeded to make strong allusions and firm resoluti-

tions, and in the end, about *July* 1672, sent away *Andrea Marcheſi* to the Court of *France*, to try what assistance they might hope from thence, to back them in any thing they should attempt, and in the mean time continued to hearten up one another, and to blow the Coals of Sedition among the people, who were sufficiently before animated against the *Spaniſh* Government, both by reason of the almost intollerable burthen of Taxes they perpetually groaned under, and the haughty and the imperious manner wherewith the *Spaniards* Tyraniz'd over them.

But whether the Crown of *France* had not as yet fully determined to make a Rupture with *Spain*, or for what other unknown occasion, *Andrea Marcheſi* found not his Propositions entertained with that Zeal, he and his confederats had expected in the Court of *France*, so that upon his return the Factions seemed somwhat cooler, and grew irresolute in their Determinations, and in this posture continued affairs till about the beginning of 1674, when the humors were not only revived, but put into a Flame, by several occurring accidents but principally by the ensuing occasion.

The Excise which is laid very high throughout all *Sicily*, especially upon all eatables and wearing apparel is usually there, as it is likewise in the Kingdom of *Naples* let out to Farm for Years: Now the Farm of the City and Territory of *Meſſina* which was before in the hands of *Girolomo Matteo*, *Georgio Caraffa*, and *Jacomo Spizzuoni*, with some others being expired at *Michaelmas* 1643, was by the assisting Favour of the *Stratico*, and his, and their interest with the Vice-Roy, got wholly into the Family of *Merli*, who had before in their hands all the principal Offices appertaining to the Magistracy and now heightned by this addition, which brought into their power the Treasure of the place, they thought their Authority boundless, and making all their Officers of their own Kindred, Party and Allyes, trampled at their pleasure over the rest of the people, oppressing them with unusual Exactions, and without distinction, abusing both Nobility, Gentry, and Commons, who in their Souls breathed forth nothing but Revenge and destruction to these their violent Oppressors.

And now their Assemblies began to be more frequent & real Conspiracies to be formed, and resolutions taken to run all hazards rather than any longer endure this Tyranny, and withall the Conjuncture seeming more favourable (*France* either having already, or being upon the point to declare War against *Spain*,) *Andrea Marcheſi* is once again dispatch't away to the Court of *France*, where he now finds a more favourable reception than formerly, and gaines not only promises but assurances of a certain success, as soon as ever they appeared in action, with which joyful news he returns home, and heartens the Conspirators, that they begin to make all necessary preparations to fall on, and redeem themselves and their City from so intollerable slavery, and had at last put things in such a Posture, that they waited only a favourable opportunity to begin the Execution.

Yet were not things so closely carried, but that the *Stratico*, and the *Merli* (who knew themselves justly envyed, and were therefore the more watchful.) had got some private intelligence, and were grown more than suspicious of the whole contrivance: Wherefore, that they might be in a better posture to defend themselves, [for they perceived the whole Body of the People incensed against them] they had sent an account of their Jealousies to the Marquels of *Bayon* then *Viceroy*, and had procured from him four Companies of *Spaniſh* Foot, which they disposed of in the Castle of *Managriffon*, the Pallace *Regal* and the *Caſtellazzo*.

This additional force, though it a little Allarum'd, yet not at all disheartned the Conspirators; for they perceived the people rather incensed than frightned at it, and therefore resolved not to omit any opportunity to fall on, which the matter it self soon gave them; for the *Stratico* and the *Merli* being Fortified with this additional Force, (which they knew was all they could expect, though things grew never so desperate) thought it the best way to put a stop to this Gangren before it ran any further, and to that end, gave private Orders for the Arresting of *Paolo Geri*, *Giorgio Carraffa*, and *Alberigo Marcheſi*, who indeed had been the principal Promoters of the Conspiracy, and most assiduous Fomenters of the people's discontents. *Paolo Geri* and *Giorgio Carraffa* fell into the hands of those were sent to apprehend them but *Alberigo Marcheſi*, having (as it is thought) some private intelligence, had secured himself in the Pallace of the *Mastri*, (which stands in the direct way to the *Caſtellazzo*, whither usually all Prisoners of Quality are carried,) and had there in an instant gathered together, near two Thousand Armed Men of the Chief Families of the Conspirators, and some of the Commons their dependants, who as the Guards were passing by with their Prisoners, Sallyed out in such Numbers on both sides the way, that they presently encompassed and seiz'd them, doubting no such matter, and being in all not above Fifty, rescued their Prisoners, and as it were by inspiration, stripping the Souldiers of their Coats, clad so many of their own number with them, and tak-

ing likewise their Arms, immediatly Marched in good Order towards the *Castellazzo*, where, though those within had freshly received the Rumour that their Companions were assaulted; yet seeing their Liveries coming, laid aside all doubt, and became extraordinarily officious to open the Gates and receive them, who having gained the Bridge, gladly let in after them the whole Croud of their Followers; so that beyond all hopes or imagination, the *Castellazzo* was in an instant Surpriz'd.

This happy success, and that so unexpected emboldened them beyond measure, and it was presently spread abroad, so that in a moment the whole people had the Alarum, & with great alacrity took Arms; and though the *Stratico* and the *Merli* did all they could in this confusion, and sent out several Companies of *Spanish* Foot to suppress them, yet they flockd toget her in such Vast Numbers that though the *Spaniards* made many brisk assaults, they were at last forced to retire with the loss, in several Skirmishes of near three hundred of their Men, though with the slaughter of more than double that Number of *Messinesses*.

And now the Inhabitants having got this Head (which happened on the 14th of *June*, 1674,) nothing was heard throughout the whole City but clamours, and Exclamations against the Tyranny and Oppression of the *Spanish* Government; every one animating his Neighbour to perfect the work they had begun, and crying out, *Let the Oppressors of the People the* Stratico *and the* Merli *Die, and let the Excise be banished for Ever*: So that before Night they had got in Arms near 30000 Men, who went under several Heads of the Conspiracy into all the Quarters of the City, breaking open the Prisons, and seizing the Publick Stores and Mony wherever they found them, and with implacable hatred, pulling down & Plundering all the Houses of the *Merli*, and committing a Thousand insolencies; Yet so well in this confusion managed they their businesse, that by break of Day they were become Masters of the Castle of *Matagrifon*, the Garrison within not being able to defend it against such Numbers as assailed them on every side, having deserted it, and made their Retreat to the Royal Palace. In this Castle they settled a Senate for the Government of Affairs, that they might maintain by Orders what they had got by Confusion.

The first work these set the people about after having disposed them into some better Order, was the gaining of the Royal Palace, (whither the *Stratico*, the *Merli*, and all the *Spaniards* were retired) which they formally Besieged, bringing several pieces of Artillery to batter it: Many Messages were sent to them by the *Stratico*, and all reasonable offers that could be thought of made them, but they would listen to nothing; so that the *Stratico* seeing no fair means would do, resolved to hold out as long as he could, and in the mean time dispatched away several Courriers to Marquis of *Bayon* Vice-Roy of the *Sicils*, to acquaint him with the ill Posture the affairs were in, and to require his speedy Assistance; but Alas, they found him not in a condition to send any sudden succours, however, he immediatly sent away to the Court at *Madrid* to acquaint them with this unexpected Revolt, and of what ill consequence it might prove if a timely remedy were not applyed; whereupon Orders were given to the Vice-Roy's of *Naples* and *Milan* to leavy Forces for his Assistance, and the *Pope*, Duke of *Florence*, *Venetians*, and *Genoueses*, were solliciced to Arm their Gallyes to joyn with those of *Naples* and *Sicily* for the Besieging of the City by Sea; but the *Pope*, Duke, & *Venetian* Excused themselves, though the *Genoueses* readily Assembled, and immediatly dispatched away two Gallies. The Marquis of *Bayon* sent likewise to the Duke of *Asturgas*, Vice Roy of this Kingdom of *Naples* for his present Assistance, but received but a cold answer; for indeed he was not then in a Posture, and could only promise to use his endeavours, as afterwards he effectually did.

Mean while the Siege Palace Royal went on, and several Assaults and Sallyes were made, the *Stratico* and *Merli* defending themselves very Resolutely, till on the third of *August*, the Besiegers caused a Mine to be sprung, by which a great part of the Palace was thrown quite to the ground; so that the *Stratico* seeing himself reduced to the last Extremity, and finding no longer possibility of defending himself in that place, and no manner of hopes of Relief, he was forced to come to a Capitulation, to surrender the Palace into the hands of the People upon Terms, that he should March out of the City with such of the Family of *Merli*, and all the *Spaniards* that were with him with their Arms Baggage, and one Piece of Cannon, and that all the rest should be left to the disposition of the People. These Conditions were very punctually performed, and the *Stratico* with all his Company, Marched out to the Castle of *St. Salvadore* a little way distant from *Messina* upon the Marine, but not thinking himself safe there, he embarked for *Melazzo*, where he found the Marquis of *Bayon*, who was already come thither in order to put things in a Posture for the reducing *Messina* by Force, since he could effect nothing by Treaty: For he had made several overtures to them in Order to an Accomodation, and had shewed himself

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very ready and willing to gratifie them in all reasonable matters, offering to remove *the Strattico* or chief Magistrate, who at first was their greatest pretended grievance; but now they had found out Numbers of others, and to all the Propositions made by the Vice-Roy seemed utterly Refractory, making in return such high and extravagant demands as he could not in Honour assent to, nor the Crown of *Spain* by any means grant, without (in a manner) giving away its whole Power and Authority over them; so that by their stubbornesse, it became apparent that they had hopes and encouragement from Abroad.

And now the *Messinesses* having driven out their *Strattico*, and got the whole City into their hands began to take a care how they might maintain that new Power they had Rebelliously usurped; wherefore they took heart, and Marched out, forcing all the Neighbouring places to furnish them with great quantities of Provisions, which they carefully laid up in stores for their future supply; they likewise took out of the several Religious Convents all the Plate which was dedicated to Holy uses, which they Coyn'd into Monies to serve their occasions; nor spared they any of the goods of their adversaries no more than their lives: for in the beginnings of these Insurrections, they put to death above 160 of the Family of the *Merli*, (to whom they bore an unplacable hatred) among which were three Ladies of Quality, whom they had caused to be Beheaded under the Character of Spies, together with a Gentleman of the Family of *Pacyodo*.

Hitherto they went on successfully, the Vice-Roy not being yet got into any condition to check much less oppress them; so that by the middle of *August* they had brought all the Country within 16 Leagues of the City under their Jurisdiction, and sent several Deputies into Forreign parts to Solicite Succours, and to buy Powder and other Amunition necessary for their Defence; but still their chief Relyance, and what they kept the people united with, was the hopes of a powerful assistance from *France*, which they had constant assurances of, which made them the more obstinate against hearkning to an Accomodation, though the Vice-Roy began to draw Forces to gather together at *Melazzo*, and that Five Gallies of *Genova* under the Command of the Marquels *Gio Dibenzo*, who had taken in 400 *Neapolitan* Soldiers at *Nisita*, was likewise arrived there with Command from that Commonwealth, to observe what Orders he should receive from the Marquis of *Bayo*; and moreover the Vice-Roys of *Naples* and *Millan* were making great Preparations, so that the cloud began to grow thick over their Heads: Yet whilst all this Force was gathering together, no endeavours of an amicable composure were accepted, but all Propositions the Vice-Roy could make were slighted by the *Messinesses*, who now alledged that they could not with safety hearken to any Accomodation till the Marquels of *Bayo* had disbanded those Forces he had at present with him, and was removed in Person to *Palermo*. And yet all the while they continued this obstinate in the very act of Rebellion: It is to be observed, they (as is usual in such cases) still protested all duty, Loyalty, and Allegeance to the King of *Spain*, declaring that they were forced to take up Arms against those who had the Chief Government of the City, who had oppressed them with many intolerable Exactions, and done several things to the prejudice and detriment of their City; upon whose removal from the Government, and the redressing of their grievances, they pretended to be willing to lay down Arms, and return to their Obedience.

But to give them the greater encouragement, there happened difference among those small Forces which the Vice-Roy had already drawn together to oppress them; a dispute arising between the General of the *Maltha* and *Genova*, Gallies (which were come to assist the Crown of *Spain* against this City) about Precedency; in which the General of the *Maltha* Gallyes, having in some manner, at the instance of the Vice-Roy of *Sicily*, yielded to the *Genovese*, incurred the displeasure of the great Master, who in anger sent for him home, so that that assistance was lost; and yet to give them more heart, about the latter end of *September* arrived at *Messina*, the *Chevalier de Valbelle* with Nine Ships, whereof Six were *French* Men of War, and the other stores of Amunition and Provision, which gave them such assurance of larger Succours from *France*, that with a great deal of Joy they put up the White Standard, declaring that they cast themselves under the Protection of that Crown; nor was this only an encouragement in it self, but in the Consequences of it: For though upon the first breaking out of these disorders, when the Crown of *Spain* desired the State of *Genova*, to send some of their Gallies to the assistance of the Vice-Roy of *Sicily*, they readily did it. Yet now the Senate being informed that several *French* Men of War were arrived at *Messina*, and that the Inhabitants had put themselves under the Protection of that Crown; they, for fear of a Rupture with so Potent an Enemy, gave immediat Orders for recalling their Gallyes, so that that part of the Assistance was likewise lost.

Yet both the Vice-Roy of *Sicily*, the Vice-Roys of *Naples* and *Millan*, and the Court of *Spain*, proceeded more vigorously in giving Orders, and Levying Forces for the reducing of this

this Citty ere things grew worſe : For now they ſaw what they feared was happen'd, and began to be apprehenſive of greater inconveniencies, (eſpecially ſince they hoped for Aſſiſtance of *Vantrump* with his Fleet had failed them,) and the *Meſſineſes* on the other part encouraged by Succeſſes they had already been flattered with, began to think of attempting greater matters; and on the 10th. of *October* took the Caſtle of St. *Salvadore*, which was the only place of Strength the *Spaniards* had remaining near the City, which they immediatly delivered up into the poſſeſſion of the *French*. In this Caſtle the *Spaniards* themſelves well at firſt; the Governour and moſt of the Garriſon having been Slain, was taken, yet then loſt it at laſt as careleſly; for the *Meſſineſes* had made many attempts upon it before the coming of the *Sieur de Valbelle*, but upon his Arrival, he reſolved formally to Beſiege this Caſtle; and accordingly, on the ſecond of *October* at Night, opened the Trenches which were continued till the Fourth at Night; the *Spaniards* being during that time forced from their utmoſt Paliſadoes, and the Beſiegers having Seized on a Well about Fifty paces from the Caſtle, from whence they within had all their Water: Whereupon on the Fifth of *October*, the *Spaniards* Capitulated, and it was agreed, that the Caſtle ſhould be delivered, if not Relieved in Eight Days; during which time, ſeveral Batteries were cauſed by the *French*, to the end, the Siege might be continued, if any Aſſiſtance ſhould come to the Beſieged; to hinder which, the *Sieur de Valbelle* Anchor'd his Ships under *San Salvador*. The Tenth of *October*, the *Spaniſh Armada*, under the Command of *Don Melchior de la Cueva*, conſiſting of Twenty Sail of Men of War appeared, and came to Anchor in ſome diſorder between *Paradis* and *Noſtredam de la Grote*; whereupon the Beſieged either apprehending them to be *French* Men of War, and conſequently looking upon themſelves as loſt, grew careleſs in keeping the Guards; or elſe for ſome other unknown Reaſons, gave the *Meſſineſſes* opportunity of Entring the Caſtle, which they did without the leaſt difficulty, making themſelves Maſters of it, and of the Officers and Soldiers in it, whom they carried Priſoners to *Meſſina*.

The 12th. of *October*, the *Spaniſh* Fleet continuing ſtill at Anchor, and in the ſame diſorder; ſeveral of their Ships having loſt their Rudders, or ſuſtained other damage; the *Sieur de Valbelle* finding the Wind favourable, ſet Sail with his Squadron, conſiſting of Five great Men of War, and Three Fire-Ships, with deſign to Attack the Enemy, and try if he could burn ſome of their Ships; in which the favourableneſs of the Wind, and their diſorder promiſed him ſome Succeſs; but the Enemy perceiving his deſign, ſet Sail, and retired to *Rheggio*: ſo *Valbelle* went a ſhore again, and having given Order for the repairing the Fortifications of St. *Salvador*, and aſſured the Senate of his Maſters Protection, took leave, and with his Squadron ſet Sail for *Thoulon*. But the Court of *Spain* was ſo much ſtartl'd at this ſucceſs, that they gave Orders for the Fortifying of *Rheggio* on the oppoſite there, and for the haſtning of the Levyes from all parts of the Dominions of that Crown, leaſt the proceedings of this City ſhould endanger, not only the Peace of all the reſt of *Sicily*, but of the Kingdom of *Naples* alſo.

To prevent therefore the Miſchiefs that might enſue by any delay in reducing this Rebellious City; the Marqueſs of *Villa Franca* is Commiſſionated Vice-Roy of *Sicily*, in the ſtead of the Marqueſs of *Bayon*; who about the beginning of *November* arrived at *Mellazzo* with 22 Gallyes, and good Supplies of Men, Mony, and Ammunition from *Spain*, to whom the Vice-Roy of *Naples* ſent daily Recruits, as well of Old as New raiſed Soldiers; beſides the two Regiments ſent by the Vice-Roy of *Millan* from that State: So that now both by Sea, and Land, there appeared a Formidable Power before *Meſſina*, and all Paſſes being block'd up, Proviſions began to grow extreamly ſcarce, and the Common people to be Diffident and Mutinous; and ſome there were that began to cry out for Peace, and though ſtill the oppoſing Party were more Prevalent, yet there wanted not thoſe that did bitterly exclaim againſt thoſe that had brought them into this Poſture; and indeed the better ſort of them, had ſome apprehenſions: for they not expecting to have been Attack'd before Spring, could not fore-ſee, how they could poſſibly for want of Proviſion, hold out all Winter.

Yet was not the *Sieur de Valbelle* unmindfull of them, nor the aſſurances he had given them of his Maſters aſſiſtance and Protection: Wherefore as ſoon as he Arrived at *Marſeilles*, he went up Poſt to *Paris*, and repreſenting to His moſt Chriſtian Majeſty, the true State of the Affairs of this City, procured Orders for a ſpeedy Succour, both of Men, and Proviſions, with a conſiderable Squadron of Men of War to convey it to *Meſſina*, for fear of Oppoſition; Mean while, ſeveral Barks with Corn, and other Proviſions ventured in to them, though ſeveral of them fell ſhort, being taken by the *Spaniard*. And now, on the 16th. of *December*, the Duke of *Ferrandina* now, newly made Vice-Roy of *Sicily*, in the ſtead of the Marqueſs of *Franca*, arrived at *Meſſina*, with 21 Gallyes, and 8 Men of War; taking in his way ſome Barks, bound hither with Proviſion, and be-

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ſides theſe loſſes, the *Meſſineſes* began now to fail of their wonted ſucceſs; for in an Encounter they had with the *Spaniards* near the *Scalleta*, they received a great defeat, three or four hundred of them being Slain upon the place, and the reſt beaten to their very Walls.

Nor was this Defeat at the *Scaletta* left unproſecuted, for, in Purſuance of it, and upon the arrival of the *Neapolitan* Galyes, with a conſiderable quantity of Men; the Duke *Florendina* with great diligence, cauſed them to advance towards the point of *Pedoro*, (whence the *Meſſineſes* had ſome very conſiderable Poſts) and to endeavour to put their Men on ſhore, and drive the Enemy thence; but the *Meſſineſes* perceiving their intention, ſtayed not for them, but immediatly quitted thoſe Poſts, and retired into the City; leaving behind them ſeveral Pieces of Cannon, and good quantity of Ammunition: Whereupon the *Spaniards* Advanced, and took from them the Tower of *Faro*, without any great Oppoſition on the Part of the *Meſſineſes*; and in purſuit of all this, they took likewiſe the Tower of the *Lanterna*, which lyes between the Caſtle of St. *Salvador*, and the City; having had ſecret intelligence with the Signor *Grimaldi*, who had the Government of it.

And to add more to their grief was the taking of their truſty Meſſenger Signor *Andrea Marcheſi*, who had been twice in *France* to Solicit Aid for them; and now going a Third time, to haſten thoſe Supplies they ſo earneſtly expected; was taken at Sea, by a ſmall Corſair of this City of *Naples*, and brought in Priſoner hither: ſeveral Letters he had taken with him which diſcovered the Straits they were reduced to, which put the *Spaniards* here in mighty heart: the Town could not long hold out, yet the better to Expedite its reducement, the Marqueſs of *Aſtorgas* gave Commiſſions to the Duke of *Martina*, and the Duke of *Canſano*, to raiſe two Regiments of Foot, to be ſent into *Sicily*; and *Andrea Marcheſi* was by the Vice-Roy of *Naples* ſent Priſoner to the Court of *Spain*.

But ſomewhat to allay all theſe ſorrows, came the ſeaſonable arrival of the *Sieur de Valbelle*, the ſecond time with Eight Men of War, and Eight other Veſſels laden with a conſiderable quantity of Proviſions, and other neceſſaries; beſides a relief of Men: The *Spaniſh* Fleet conſiſting of 21 Men of War, and 21 Gallyes had lain a long time in the Narrow, watching to prevent any Succours comeing in to Town; but now when they ſaw the *Chevalier de Valbelle* appeared with his Squadron, they lay ſtill with all this great Fleet on the *Calabrian* ſide, giving him free paſſage, without offering to make the leaſt oppoſition, or ſhewing any deſign of preventing him; whether it proceeded from ſome difference about Precedency, which happend between the General of the Ships, and General of the Gallyes, ſo that they could not agree who ſhould fall on firſt; Or whether they were ſtupified, as moſt think: For certainly, never came Supply ſo ſeaſonable as this did to the *Meſſineſes*, who were reduced to ſuch Extremities for want of Proviſion, and other Neceſſaries, that they ſeemed not to think of any thing, but how to reconcile themſelves to the *Spaniards*; whereas by this [illegible]tune Supply, they were ſo well Recruited, that they became not at all doubtful o[illegible]ng able to defend themſelves for a good while: The *Chevalies de Valbelle* not only bringing them this Relief, but aſſuring them that the Marqueſs of *Vivonne* would ſoon follow after him, with a far Greater. Whereupon for Joy, as they had at his firſt Arrival, delivered up to him the Caſtle of St. *Salvador*, that Commanded the Port; ſo now they delivered up to him the Caſtle of *Mattagriffon* that Commands the Town, whereby the *French* became abſolute Maſters of the City.

Yet notwithſtanding the Duke of *Florendina* endeavoured by all means, and ways poſſible, to endeavour to ſuppreſs them by Land, and was very much afflicted at his miſcarriage by Sea, as were likewiſe the whole Court of *Spain* when they heard it; Yet they gave all the careful Orders they could to bring the matter to a good iſſue, and put things in ſuch a poſture, that the Vice-Roy might be able to lay a cloſe Siege; and that with a Powerful Army, by firſt of the Spring; to which end, Count *Anthonio Trottie* had ſent his Lt. Colonel from the State of *Millan* into *Germany*, to compleat his Regment to 2000 Men, and the *Sieur Don Emannel de Portugal*, was likewiſe gone thither, to raiſe a new Regiment for the ſervice of *Sicily*, beſides the great Levies that were making in the Kingdom of *Naples*; but in the mean while, ſeveral Veſſels loden with Corn from *Rochel*, under the Conduct of *Monſieur de Gance*, ſeconded the Recruits juſt before brought in by the *Chevalier de Valbelle*; along with whom, there was likewiſe come the Marqueſs of *Valavoir*, with a compleat Regiment of 600 Men, and Title of Commander, in Chief of His moſt Chriſtian Majeſties Forces in *Sicily*; by woſe courage and active aſſiſtance, the Inhabitants of *Meſſina* had ſo mended their Affairs, that they had repaired all thoſe Damages, ſo lately ſuſteined by the *Spaniards*; and had regained all thoſe conſiderable Poſts taken from them, (particularly the Towers of *Faro*, and *la Lanterna*) which had put the

people

People into freth heart, and made them Treat the Marqueſs with ſuch extraordinary Reſpect, and kindneſs, that they lodg'd him in the Pallace Royal, and Stil'd him their Protector and Defender; whilſt on the other ſide, the *Spaniards* were Alarum'd and ſo ſencibl of the fault they had committed, of permitting the *Chevalier de Valbelle* and *Grance* to enter with that welcome Relief, that ſtrict Orders were given to the Fleet, to cruiſe with more diligence before the Port; and by all means poſſible, endeavour to prevent the the comeing in of the Marqueſs of *Vivonne*, who was expected with a third Supply, not doubting, but if they could hinder his Entrance, the Proviſions already in the Town, would ſoon be ſpent among ſo Numerous a people; and if they could once more bring them into want, they doubted not but ſoon to bring them to a complyance; and to give more colour to their Affairs, they uſed all diligence to bring as many Forces as they could before the City, and form a cloſe Siege; and it was every where reported that the Forces, lately in *Catalonia*, under the Command of the Duke of St. *Germain*, were already imbarked to come to their Aſſiſtances; and the Marqueſs of *Aſtorgas* Vice-Roy of *Naples* did really labour, with all earneſtneſs to ſupply the Vice-Roy of *Sicily* with a conſiderable aſſiſtance from hence; in Order to which, he demanded of all the Nobillity of this Kingdom, that according to their reſpective Quallities, they ſhould raiſe certain Horſemen, to be formed into Troops, and Regiments, for the Service of His Catholick Majeſty againſt the *Meſſineſi*: but all theſe preparations ſeemed, both to themſelves and to their enemies, but as ſo many Bug-Bears; for their whole dependance was really in their Fleet, and they knew very well, that unleſs they could hinder Proviſions from comeing in by Sea, they ſhould be able to do very little, or no good by Land.

And herein they took their Meaſures right, had they proſecuted them aswell, had Fortune favoured their diligence, as it did at the beginning of theſe Reſolves; For then it happened, that a Ship with 5000 Meaſures of Corn, and 50000 Crowns in Mony fell into their hands, which was a joyful Prize to the *Spaniards*; and their joys was doubled, when they had at firſt certain intelligence that Corn began to grow ſcarce in the City, and at laſt that the common people were reduced to ſuch great and pinching neceſſities, that they were forced to feed a good while on Horſes, Mules, Cats, and Dogs; and were in the end brought ſo low, that they were conſtrained to take the hides, after they had lain a conſiderable time in the *Tanſat*, and accomodating them in the beſt manner they could diſtribute them, among the poorer ſort gratis, at two Ounces a Man for a day's Allowance.

And becauſe afflictions, and diſtreſſes of this kind, have always their concomitant miſchiefs; and among a people oppreſſed with want, ſome are leſs able or willing to endure the Pangs of it than others; and neceſſity puts it their heads to relieve themſelves, though with the general calamity: It happened that a Gunner belonging to *Caſtellazzo*, had kept private intelligence with the *Spaniards*, to deliver that Foretreſs into their hands; and to that end, on the *9th.* of *February* laſt had given Thirty *Spaniards* ſecret Entrance into the place, and a Thouſand more were Advanced hard by to ſecure the deſign; but the Plot coming to be diſcovered by the *French*, the Execution was prevented, and the Gunner taken, and Hang'd; And to prevent ſuch Corruptions for the future, all the *Meſſineſſes* were removed out of all the Forts, and holds about the City, and *French* put in Garriſon into them; ſo that this miſerable City, was now become abſolutly ſubject to new Maſters.

Hitherto through all theſe Extremities they bore up, out of the aſſurances they had, that *Monſieur de Vivonne* was at hand, with a conſiderable Supply; though it was impoſſible they could have farther ſuſteined themſelves, but muſt have ſtarved, or ſurrendred to the Mercy of the *Spaniard*, if His comeing were but a little more delay'd: But it pleaſed God, that on the *11th.* of *February*, he appeared about a League from the *Fares* mouth, to their unſpeakable Joy, yet had their Joy a ſufficient allay of fear when they beheld the *Spaniſh* Fleet, conſiſting of Twenty Men of War, and Sixteen Gallyes ſteering from the *Catabrian* ſide in good Order; yet with great Fury to oppoſe the *French* paſſage, and drive them, if they could, from entring into the Port, but *Monſieur de Vivonne* perceiving their intentions, ſoon ranged his little Fleet, conſiſting of Nine Men of War, into three Squadrons of three Men of War each, and with great Courage and Reſolution, received the *Spaniſh* Charge; Bravely maintaining the Fight by himſelf, againſt all that advantage, from Eight of of the Clock in the Morning, till Noon; about which time, *Monſieur de Valbelle* with ſix Men of War, and three Fire-Ships, came out of *Meſſina* to their aſſiſtance; upon whoſe arrival, the Fight was renewed more briskly on the *French* ſide, than it had bin begun on the *Spaniards*: ſo that about Three of the Clock in the Afternoon, the *French* got the Weather-gage, and the *Spaniards* (no longer able to endure the Brunt) having their Riging very much ſhattered, and Torne, began to Retire; and at length, ſpreading all the Canvas they could, made their way towards the City of *Naples*: Whither they came in

about

about three dayes since, in a very Torne and Tattered conditon, and with minds as much dejected as their Fortunes, here being most of them: They are but 15 of their Men of War returned hither, and one of those without any Masts; as for the other Five, one called the *Madona del Populo*, a Ship of Forty Guns, we certainly know to be in *Messina*, having been taken by the *Chevalier de Valbelle*: what became of the rest, they themselves can give but a very slender account; but it is generally believed that being much Torne, they Sunk in the Night after the Fight. The *French* loss amounted not to above 200 slain and wounded. This so great and considerable Defeat, attended with the consequence of the so lucky Relief of *Messina*, has so Nettled the *Spaniards*, that they Publickly exclaimed against the Cowardise, and evil managemement of their Generals, and other Officers of the Fleet. The Marquess of *Astorgos* (who all along expressed his Zeal, and earnestness to reduce this Rebellious City) seemed most of all afflicted, and could not forbear to express his particular Resentments, against *Don Melchior del la Cieva*, and Marquess of *Piso*, the two Admiralls; And it is expected by all Men, that both they, and other Officers, will by the Court of *Spain* be called to a strict account, for a Miscarriage of so High a Nature; and which it may reasonably be expected, will be attended by such Fatal Consequences: If the *French* (as no doubt but upon such encouragement they will) proceed in this conjuncture, to send greater Succours.

Mounsieur de Vivone pursued the *Spaniards*, Fighting till it was almost Night; but then being informed that the *Messineses* had been already several dayes without Bread, he left off the Pursuit, and made all hast he could to relieve them; whose Arrival could not but be extream Welcom to those miserable people, who had endured such Vast Extreamities; and that they might (in the best manner they could) express their Joy, and Gratitude to His most Christian Majesty, for so many and timely Succours; the whole People with Universal consent, took an Oath of Fidelity to the Crown of *France*, and received from *Monsieur de Vivonne*, assurances that there were yet more considerable Succours near at hand. The *Spaniards* were so amaz'd at *Monsieur de Vivone*'s Entrance, that they quitted several considerable Posts; However they seem not utterly disheartned, but give out that they shall in a Month or Six weeks, have a great Army in readiness, and be in a Posture to lay a close Siege to the City.

Thus I have given as full an account, according to your desire, and my promise, of the Original Cause, and Progress of the troubles of this Great, and Populous City hitherto, what the issue will be, no body is able to Divine; especially, considering the Obstinacy of the Inhabitants, in defending themselves, and the Powerful Assistance they have; which until it fails them, they will certainly undergo all hazards, rather than fall again udner the *Spanish* Yoak (especially now, they have so grievously offended and Allarum'd them: For, considering on the other side, the *Spanish* Zeal, and earnestness to reduce them, and fears, and jealousies they have been put into. It cannot but be imagined, the *Messineses* must be [indeed] a miserable People, if ever by Force they become again their Masters; and, on the other side, it is to be doubted, the *French* will hardly let go, the hold they have now there. I cannot tell therefore, where to place a *Medium* to a reconciliation of these disorders; unless when it shall please God to dispose *Christendom*, to a General Peace; some happy Expedient (not yet thought of) be found out. I am afraid, I have been too tedious, and therefore take my *leave*, and remain,

SIR,

Your most humble Servant,

E. W.

FINIS.

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